

WHAT IS CLAIMED AS NEW AND DESIRED TO BE SECURED BY LETTERS
PATENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS:

1. A composition comprising a prebiotic amount of one or more purified fructans,
5 wherein at least one of said one or more purified fructans is predominately GF_n, provided that the fructan component of the composition is not solely a mixture of 1-kestose, 1-nystose and 1^f-fructosylnystose.
2. A composition according to claim 1, wherein said at least one predominately GF_n fructan has a degree of polymerization of greater than 4.
- 10 3. A composition according to claim 1, wherein said at least one predominately GF_n fructan is a levan.
4. A composition according to claim 1, wherein said at least one predominately GF_n fructan is a branched fructooligosaccharide.
5. A composition according to claim 1, wherein said at least one predominately GF_n
15 fructan is a mixture of short-chain fructans having an average degree of polymerization of 4.
6. A composition according to claim 1, comprising at least two or more predominately GF_n fructans.
7. A composition comprising a prebiotic amount of one or more purified fructans, provided that said one or more purified fructans is not solely a mixture of predominately F_n
20 FOS, and is not solely a mixture of 1-kestose, 1-nystose, and 1^f-fructosylnystose.
8. A composition comprising a prebiotic amount of one or more purified fructans, wherein at least one of said one or more purified fructans is predominately GF_n and has a degree of polymerization greater than 4.
9. A composition comprising a prebiotic amount of one or more purified fructans,
25 wherein the fructan in said composition is not solely one of Meioligo, Actilight, NutraFlora,

Oligo-Sugar, Raftilose, Raftiline, or Fibruline.

10. A composition according to claim 1, wherein said purified fructan comprises less than about 5% glucose by weight.

11. A composition according to claim 3, wherein said levan is substantially
5 unbranched.

12. A composition according to claim 3, wherein said levan is substantially branched.

13. A composition according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said one or more purified fructans is chosen from substantially branched inulins and substantially unbranched, predominately GF_n inulins, wherein n is greater than 5.

10 14. A sweetener composition comprising:

i) one or more purified, predominately GF_n fructans, wherein n ranges from 3 to 20;
and

ii) a trichloro-glucose-fructose in an amount ranging from about 0.1% to about 1% by weight.

15 15. The sweetener composition of claim 14 wherein said trichloro-glucose-fructose ranges from about 0.01% to about 1.0% by weight.

16. A bifidogenic food additive comprising a prebiotic amount of one or more purified fructans, provided that said one or more purified fructans is not solely a mixture of predominately F_n FOS, and is not solely a mixture of 1-kestose, 1-nystose, and 1^f-
20 fructosyl_nystose.

17. A method for promoting internal microbial balance, comprising contacting an internal body cavity with a composition comprising one or more purified fructans in an amount effective for promoting the proliferation of beneficial bacteria, wherein at least one of said one or more purified fructans is predominately GF_n, provided that the fructan component

of the composition is not solely a mixture of 1-kestose, 1-nystose, and 1^f-fructosylⁿnystose.

18. A method according to claim 17 wherein said internal body cavity is intestinal or vaginal.

19. A method according to claim 18 wherein said internal body cavity is vaginal and
5 said composition is in the form of a cream or emollient.

20. A method according to claim 17, wherein the beneficial bacteria is of the genus *bifidus* or *lactobacillus*.

21. A method according to claim 20, wherein the composition selectively promotes proliferation of said beneficial bacteria, not of pathogenic bacteria.

10 22. A method according to claim 20, wherein the pathogenic bacteria is *E. coli* or *salmonella*.

23. A low-calorie food additive comprising purified fructan, wherein said fructan is substantially branched, prebiotic, and comprises predominantly a mixture of GF_n, where n ranges from 3 to about 20.

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